



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mldlatino caucus.org

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO, CHAIR
JOSELINE A. PEÑA-MELNYK, VICE-CHAIR
GABRIEL ACEVERO, TREASURER
JESSE T. PIPPY, SECRETARY
CESIAH FUENTES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMBERS

ALFRED CARR
ALONZO WASHINGTON
ANNE HEALEY
ARIANA B. KELLY
BEN BARNES
BENJAMIN KRAMER
BONNIE CULLISON
BROOKE LIERMAN
CAROL L. KRIMM
CHARLOTTE CRUTCHFIELD
CHERYL KAGAN
CRAIG ZUCKER
DAVID MOON
DIANA FENNEL
EMILY SHETTY
EREK BARRON
ERIC LUEDTKE
GERALDINE VALENTINO-SMITH
GUY GUZZONE
HEATHER BAGNALL
J. SANDY BARTLETT
JAMES ROSAPEPE
JARED SOLOMON
JAZZ LEWIS
JEFF WALDSTREICHER
JEN TERRASA
JESSICA FELDMARK
JHEANELLE WILKINS
JILL P. CARTER
JIM GILCHRIST
JULIAN IVEY
JULIE PALAKOVICH CARR
KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
KEN KERR
LESLEY LOPEZ
LILY QI
LISA BELCASTRO
LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
MAGGIE MCINTOSH
MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
MARC KORMAN
MARY A. LEHMAN
MARY WASHINGTON
MELISSA WELLS
MIKE ROGERS
NICOLE WILLIAMS
PAMELA BEIDLE
PAMELA QUEEN
REGINA T. BOYCE
ROBBYN LEWIS
SHANE PENDERGRASS
SHANEKA HENSON
SHELLA RUTH
SHELLY HETTLEMAN
STEPHANIE SMITH
SUSAN C. LEE
TERRI HILL
VAUGHN STEWART
WANIKA FISHER
WILL SMITH

TO: Senator William C. Smith Jr, Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: February 10, 2021

RE: SB478 Correctional Services – Immigration Detention –
Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

The MLLC supports SB478 Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act).

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB478.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) private detention centers are motivated by one thing: profits. ICE and private prison companies exploit immigrant communities, largely who are Latino, and target jurisdictions that may need extra revenue. This business approach of immigration is deceitful, dehumanizing, and as a result treats people as commodities. [2017 ICE data](#) suggests that about 71% of immigrants are detained in a privately run facility. In recent years, ICE focused on detaining all undocumented individuals, yet most detainees were [categorized](#) as “no threat” or “non-criminal.” Immigrants who are trying to build a better life for themselves and their family have a price over their heads.

Due to their bottom-line priority, private prison companies are also not compelled to maintain healthy and safe environments for detained immigrants. Nor do they have to because many are granted federal [waivers](#) that exempt them from complying with federal performance standards. Private prison companies would rather invest in more beds than in adequate food and medical care. Throughout the nation, there have been many [reports](#) of abuse, sexual assault, and even deaths in these centers. The legislature must rectify this gross, inhumane treatment of immigrants.

SB478 prohibits the State or any local jurisdictions from creating new ICE contracts with private detention companies and requires existing contracts to phase out by 2022. Maryland must stop the commercialization of family separations and incarceration. Families are being torn apart, lives are shaken and uprooted, and communities are instilled with fear because of greed. We stand with our vulnerable immigrant populations to end these ICE contracts.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on SB478.